

For immediate release

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*House passes reauthorization of children's health insurance program*

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Albio Sires voted in support of H.R. 2, the Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2009, a bill to reauthorize State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The bill passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 289 to 139. The Program was originally set to expire last year after President Bush twice vetoed bipartisan bills that would have reauthorized and improved but Congress succeeded last year in temporarily extending the program through March, 2009. Today's passage of H.R. 2 will reauthorize the program for over 4 and one-half years and make several important changes to serve more needy children.

"I am proud to have voted once again to make sure 10 million American children receive the healthcare they need." H.R. 2 extends health insurance coverage to 4 million additional low income children. This bill extends eligibility to middle-income children whose families cannot afford or qualify for private insurance. In New Jersey, an additional 10,000 children in families with incomes up to approximately \$75,000 for a family of four may would qualify for health insurance if this bill is enacted.

With rising unemployment, the SCHIP bill has become more critical than ever. When unemployment increases, so do the number of Americans without health insurance. In this recession, more and more American parents are having difficulty finding affordable health insurance for their children making this legislation even more important. "This is a question of providing for our children, not a question of politics. A healthy child does better in school, preparing themselves for a successful life as an adult. It is shameful that we are the only country in the developed world that does not provide health care to all of its children. With passage of this bill, we are one giant step closer to putting us on par with the rest of the developed world."

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